

NEW NICK CARTER WEEKLY



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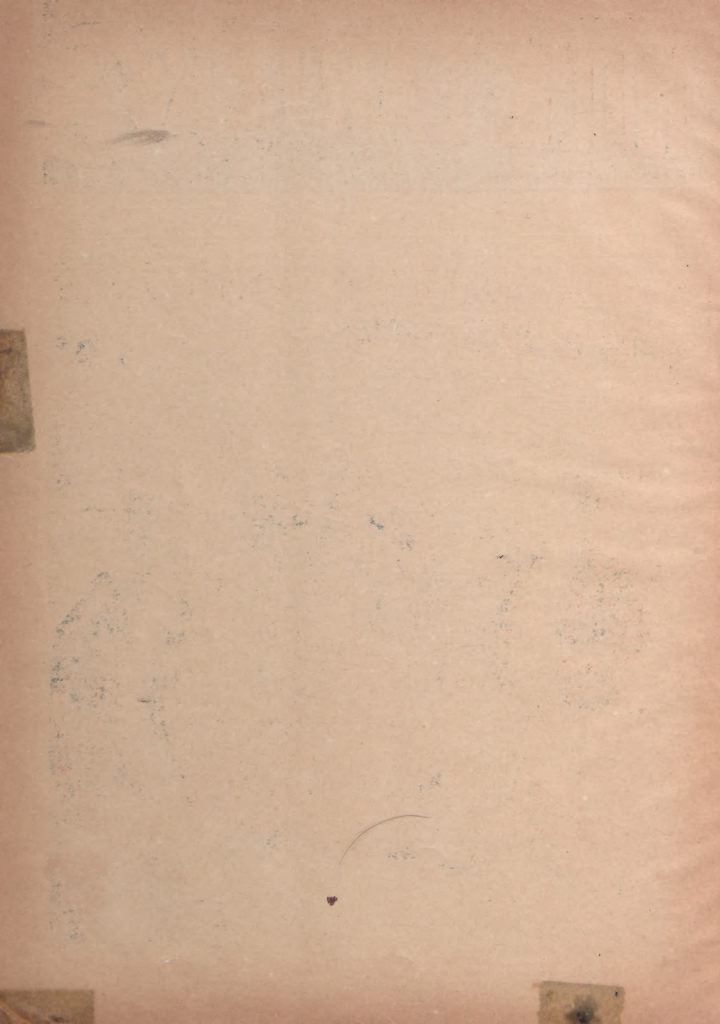
Price, Five Cents.

THE TERRIBLE GAME OF MILLIONS OR TRACKING DOWN THE PLOTTERS



by
THE AUTHOR OF "NICK CARTER"

"Come!" he called out; and then, as if it were a prearranged signal, the three doors which opened into the apartment flew wide ajar simultaneously, and through each of them two men stepped into the room, heavily armed.





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No. 398

NEW YORK, August 13, 1904.

Price Five Cents.

The Terrible Game of Millions;

OR,

TRACKING DOWN THE PLOTTERS.

Edited by CHICKERING CARTER.

CHAPTER I.

THE PROBLEM OF A MILLIONAIRE.

"MR. CARTER: I want you again, and I want you right away. Can you take dinner with me at my house at seven o'clock this evening? Answer.

"Yours truly,

"JARED LOGAN."

Nick Carter closed the note together, returned it to the envelope, and, turning to the messenger, said:

"Tell him that he may expect me."

The great mansion in which Jared Logan, capitalist, financier, money king and magnate lived was located on Fifth Avenue above Fifty-ninth Street, and at ten minutes before seven o'clock that evening the great detective was admitted to the trust-maker's library, where he found that gentleman awaiting him.

"On time, as always, I see," said Mr. Logan, rising and extending his hand. "Dinner will be announced at once, and as we will dine alone and undisturbed, we will discuss the business matter on which I have summoned you, at that time. Now, first tell me, how are you? How have you been since we fixed up that little matter of the bonds?"

"Never better," replied Nick, smiling.

"And the inspector? How is he?"

"I haven't seen him since the day following our parting in this room, but it is safe to assume that he is as fit as the rest of us."

"I hope so. It doesn't seem as if an entire month had elapsed since you sent out and had the criminals, who had robbed me, brought to this room instead of

going after them as anybody else would have been obliged to do—does it?"

"No; it really does not."

"I was surprised when I looked up the date this afternoon, to find that it was just a month, to a day. Still, a month is little enough time for Daniel J. Dean to begin to make his claws felt."

"Ah!" said Nick. "So it is Dean who is the cause of your sending for me to-day?"

"You bet it is. Very much Dean; very much, indeed."

"What has he been doing now?"

Before the reply could be made, dinner was announced, and the conversation was not resumed until the dinner was well under way, and the servant had been bidden to retire and to remain outside until called for.

"Now, Carter," said the rich man, "I think we may venture to reopen the subject which interests us both."

"At your service," responded Nick.

"You know—or if you do not know, you can readily understand why—old Dean has had it in for me in a thousand and one different ways ever since that affair of the bonds."

"I had supposed he would. In fact, I was not surprised when your summons came to me to-day. The only surprise connected with its receipt, was that it did not come much sooner."

"I don't doubt it. Perhaps it is almost a wonder that he has not had me murdered before this."

"Hardly that," said Nick, with a smile.

The magnate leaned forward across the table and said, with slow emphasis:

"And yet, my dear Carter, that is exactly the game he is playing."

Nick Carter's smile instantly changed to a frown.

"Do you mean to say that Daniel J. Dean, who is almost a billionaire, who is a prominent church mem-

ber, leader of Bible classes galore, and generally a respected man, would stoop to such a low and common method of revenge as that?" he asked.

"Well," replied Mr. Logan, "it is quite certain that somebody has tried to kill me. I am not prepared to say that Dean did it, but I'll give you the field against him, and lay you a hundred to one, in any amount you please, that if he should step into the Palace of Truth and should happen to be asked the question while he was there, he could come pretty close to giving a lucid explanation."

"Humph!" said Nick.

"Exactly," responded Logan. "That is what I've been saying right along. In fact, it is about all I could say; so I decided to send for you."

"You think, then, that without a doubt Dean hates you cordially, and that nothing short of your death will satisfy him?"

"You have about expressed my idea of the situation."

"I supposed it was the practice of men such as he, when they happened to hate anybody, to break them. To reduce their enemies to poverty. To send them to the wall."

"So it is—as a rule; but that would not suffice in this case."

"Why not in this case as much as any other?"

"Because I know too much."

"About what?"

"Need you ask?"

"I often ask questions when I already know the answer. If you were in my business, you would know why."

"Perhaps I know, anyhow."

"Well, then—about what?"

"About that bond business. You don't for an instant suppose that there has been an hour of any day since that happened when he has not thought about it,

and wondered how the whole thing came about as it did, do you?"

"No; on the contrary, I happen to know that your surmise is correct."

"Indeed! How so?"

"Because I have taken the trouble to keep him rather well shadowed since the day when we outwitted him so nicely."

"Good. I had an idea that you would do that very thing. I wish you would tell me about it."

"Later. When we get to it."

"Well; to return; don't you see the point?"

"Perfectly well; just the same, I wish to hear your view of it."

"Suppose, in that case, I put it this way: Five Wall Street men, of which I am one, seek to combine the capitals of several large companies into one, and so to organize what the world popularly calls a trust. I have certain views respecting that organization which Dean combats, but I am the real organizer in the transaction, and by delicate maneuvering I succeed in inducing a majority of the parties concerned to think my way, and I have the thing all but ready when my private vault is blown open and all the bonds which are to be needed in completing that transaction are stolen, so that I will not be able to produce them at the crucial moment—in short, so that one man in that party—Dean—can make it appear that I am purposely withholding the bonds. That is what happened, isn't it?"

"Partly; go on."

"That is what would have happened if you and Inspector McClusky had not prevented it. Now, Dean believed that those bonds had been stolen——"

"He knew they had been, since he stole them himself."

"Exactly. He knew that they had been stolen. He believed them to be in the possession of his agent when

he attended that meeting. At least, he was positive in his own mind that I could not produce them."

"Correct."

"He even went to the extent of making a speech to that effect before the bonds were asked for—a speech in which he all but called me a thief. All the same, when the bonds were called for, I opened a safe that stood at my elbow, and—I produced the bonds."

"Whereat old Dean very promptly fainted away from excess of emotion, eh?"

"Or fright; yes. And then, he had to give way. He was forced to let me control that meeting and to arrange the details as I pleased. You don't know how that hurt him."

"I can imagine."

"Well, now, look here, Carter. According to the knowledge you succeeded in obtaining about that robbery, things were about this way when I unexpectedly produced the bonds: The last time Dean had seen that room, forty-eight hours earlier, it was a wreck. The three safes in it had been blown or burned to pieces; when he entered it that evening, everything was in seeming order. When he called for the bonds, they were ready, while all the time he supposed them to be locked in a safe belonging to an architect named Morrison, at the Finance and Credit Company's bank. It wasn't disappointment which made him faint away; it was fright."

"Perhaps."

"And when he recovered from the fainting spell he had to be taken home at once, because he was too ill to remain; and when he went away he left the whole thing in my hands. You were there, and you know. He gave me his verbal proxy in the presence of all the others, and sent me the written one to put on file, the next day."

"Well! Then what?"

"Why, then he began to wonder how in blazes those bonds got back into my safe."

"Sure thing," said Nick, laughing.

"And the more he wondered about it, the less able he was to account for it."

"That's another sure thing, too."

"And he's wondering yet," said the Wall Street magnate with a grin.

"Sure thing number three," was Nick Carter's comment.

"Now, it never has occurred to him that the Nicholas Carter whose name was added to the list of our directors that night, and who sat at the table with us, was you, and—here is the point: He gives me credit for ten thousand times more wit than I've got."

"How so?"

"Why, he has figured it out about this way: He thinks that I had sense enough to light upon the architect and the contractors at once, as being the really guilty parties, and he probably thinks that I either intimidated them into telling me the entire story, or that I bought them. He knows that Morrison had the bonds; he knows that I got them back again; ergo, he knows that I got them from Morrison."

"Well?"

"Well, he knows, therefore, that I know him to be a thief and a burglar, and he thinks that I am only biding my time, to put the screws onto him in a way that will make him squeal worse than a stuck pig."

"Which I have no doubt you have all along fully intended to do, when the time comes," said Nick.

"I'll admit it; but what of it. Men who are interested in the game we are playing—the game that is called millions, resort to every expedient in their power to win at the game. That affair of the bonds proves that. Dean knows that some day there will arise a

circumstance when I will feel it necessary to force him to think as I do upon some deal that may come up. He knows that such a situation might mean the gain to me and the loss to him of several million dollars, but he knows another thing which is of more importance than that. He knows that when I decided to do such a thing, it would mean that he had met his master, and that he would be obliged to acknowledge defeat. That is where the shoe pinches."

"Just the mere fact that he knows himself to be in your power."

"Just that."

"Well?"

"There is only one way in all the world for him to escape from the consequences of it."

"Good! What is that?"

"By acting in the capacity of pall-bearer at my funeral, for there is no doubt that he would be asked to serve if I should happen to die. But that isn't all, Carter."

"No? What more?"

"He has, I believe, already gotten rid of the other three, the architect and the two contractors."

"What makes you think that?" asked Nick, more interested than he permitted to appear.

"This: We know where they went when they left this house; we know that they were to be detained at police headquarters until after that meeting when I produced bonds; we know that they sent word to their families that they would be absent two or three days; we know that they were released about sixty hours later, but we did not know—and I did not know it until to-day—that not one of the three, Morrison, Forbes or Robertson, has been seen since their release. They have disappeared."

CHAPTER II.

A BOMB, A PISTOL, AND POISONED CANDY.

"This is getting interesting," said Nick, settling back in his chair. "Suppose you tell me how you know about it."

"I know about it because the wife of each one of those three men has written to me for information."

"How is that?"

"It seems that in the letters they sent to their homes, in which they explained that they would be absent two or three days, each one of them mentioned my name—mentioned my affairs as the cause of their detention."

"Which was true."

"Of course. Well, to-day, I received three letters—one from each one of those women."

"Go on."

"The letters are at my office, but the substance of them was the same. They told of the fact that their husbands had informed them by letter that they would be away from home two or three days, on business for Mr. Logan, and that since the receipt of those letters they had not heard a word from any of them. There you are. Those women believed that I could supply the addresses of their husbands—and, by thunder, I believe I could."

"What do you mean by that?"

"That they are dead."

"Bosh!"

"And that old Dean is the cause of their not returning to their homes."

"That sounds more reasonable. What answer did you send to the ladies?"

"I sent word that I knew nothing about their husbands; that they had no business to attend to for me, and that there must be some mistake about their surmises. Good Heaven, Carter, I don't want to be mixed up in that business."

"Naturally not."

"But I do want to do the next best thing for those three women."

"What is that?"

"I want you to find out what became of their husbands. You are not above doing that, are you, since you became a millionaire?"

"I have been a millionaire for several years, Mr. Logan."

"Good. That's the answer I believed you would make."

"It seems to me," said Nick, "that we are forgetting the principle topic of this interview."

"What was that? I have forgotten."

"Your own danger. You said that efforts had already been made to kill you."

"Well, it's true."

"What sort of efforts?"

"Just the ordinary sort, I expect. Bombs, poisoned candy, and pistols."

"Explain what you mean."

"That is easily done. Night before last, when I took my accustomed canter through the park, I remained out later than usual. In returning, I came through the Seventy-second Street gate into Fifth Avenue. Before you get to that gate, the bridle path leads through a bit of woods—a sort of ravine. Come back into the library now—we'll have our coffee there—and I will show you the hat I wore on that occasion."

"What about the hat?"

"It has got a bullet hole through the crown of it which was not there when I started on my return from my ride."

"I see. Fired at you from the bushes?"

"From somewhere. I didn't wait to see exactly where the bullet came from. It was sufficient for me to know that it came from a pistol and that the pistol was aimed at me. I hurried home."

"And you pursued your usual method of silence, I suppose, and told nobody of the occurrence."

"I haven't mentioned it until now; neither have I ridden in the park since then."

"I suppose not. Now, what about the other things?"

"The bomb and the candy?"

"Yes."

"The candy came last night. It was here when I got home. Everybody who knows me, knows that I am very fond of candy. I eat as much of it, or more, than a schoolgirl. It is my favorite dissipation."

"Well?"

"All the same I don't happen to know about anybody who has ever taken the trouble to send candy to me. I suppose they have thought quite generally that I was able to buy my own."

"No doubt."

"But I didn't think of that when I opened the box of candy. I put it on the table right here, and broke the wrappings. The candy looked fine—luscious. I smacked my lips in anticipation, while I lifted a piece of it to my mouth. In another minute I would have been as dead as a herring, only that I happened to lift my eyes at that instant and they lighted upon the bullet hole in that hat. It was also on the table close beside the candy."

"Well?"

"I saw through that hole, and I saw through a great big mill stone at the same time. I put the candy back into the box, untasted; and after that I did a mean thing."

"What did you do?"

"I don't like to poison an animal any better than a girl would, but I had to know about that candy. There was a stray dog that had been yelping around the street here for two or three days, and I happened to hear him outside at that moment. I went to the door and called the dog to me. I gave him two pieces of

the candy. Carter, that dog was dead before he had time to touch the second piece."

"Cyanide of potassium," said Nick.

"Probably. I dragged the dog down to the gutter and left him there. Then I picked up the second piece of candy, returned it to the box, and locked the box in one of my safes."

"And, as in the case of the pistol shot, said nothing about it, I suppose."

"I have not mentioned it till now."

"What about the bomb?"

"That came to-day."

"To-day!"

"Yes."

"It was here when you arrived home this evening."

"Yes."

"You weren't expecting it when you wrote me the letter, were you?"

"Not particularly."

"What have you done with it?"

"It is here; that is, it is in my strong room, waiting for you to open it—if you care to do so."

"What is it?"

"You can search me, Mr. Carter. All that I know about it is that I was not expecting a package of any sort."

"So you have not even taken off the wrapper?"

"I haven't touched it save to carry it into the strong room, and leave it there."

"I don't know that I blame you for your caution."

"I'm getting wise. If a bullet hole through my hat while that hat is on my head, and a package of candy stuffed with cyanide of potassium isn't sufficient to put one wise—Well, that's the story."

"We'll soak the package later, and then examine it," said Nick.

"You can examine it, Carter, if you care to do so."

s for me, I haven't a particle of curiosity on the subject."

"I suppose these occurrences have made you nervous, haven't they?"

"Nervous? Well, not exactly that. I haven't many nerves left, I think; but I know this much."

"What is that?"

"If you don't find a way to prevent it, old Dean will carry his point, and I will be a dead man inside of a week. That's all."

CHAPTER III.

DELICATE WORK FOR CHICK AND PATSY.

"I suppose you are perfectly satisfied in your own mind that Daniel J. Dean is responsible for all these circumstances?"

"Aren't you?"

"I was asking you that question."

"As for me—I am more than satisfied; I am convinced."

"And yet it is doubtful if there will ever be a way to find proof of such a thing."

"Why? Because you think Dean would cover up his tracks so thoroughly that there will be no chance of proving anything against him?"

"Yes."

"He tried that dodge once before, and failed."

"All the more reason why he should exhibit more caution in the future."

"Perhaps so. All the same, I think you will catch him."

"I am afraid that that remark is due more to your confidence in me than to your doubts of Dean's perspicacity."

"Perhaps it is. It is, nevertheless, my belief."

"Well, we will see what can be done."

"You bet we will. And now, in the meantime——"

"Well?"

"What do you recommend that I should do?"

"How do you mean?"

"Well, I am more or less tenacious of life. I'm not hankering after the unknowable to any very great extent. I don't think that I am prepared to die—at least, not yet."

"Oh, I see!"

"Shall I hunt the woods? Go off on a search for a cyclone cellar? Buy a bomb-proof residence down at one of the forts, or only go away back and sit down?"

"I should not recommend any one of those remedies."

"No? What would you recommend?"

"Nothing at all."

"What? Do you want me to step out into the open and invite the accumulated assassins to shoot?"

"Just that."

"Looks like rather a foolhardy proceeding, doesn't it?"

"Not at all."

"Perhaps you will tell me why not?"

"Well, I have never kept an exact count, but I have reason to believe that my life has been sworn away five or six hundred times; and I have never yet found time to dodge the people who have done it."

"Yes; but——"

"Your case amounts to the same thing. True, you are not as accustomed to danger as I am, and, perhaps, you would not be as quick to avoid it; all the same, I would not dodge, and I would not let Dean—if it is Dean—or anybody else suppose that I gave his efforts to put me out of the way a second thought."

"All right. You're the doctor."

"Go about your affairs just as if nothing had happened at all to disturb the serenity of your habits."

"I see."

"I should not recommend that you ride in the park

after dark, or, in fact, at all, for a little while; and I think that until I have worked on this thing a little, and therefore am better prepared to advise, you would do well to be as busy as possible."

"What do you mean by that? I am always as busy as possible."

"True enough; and yet you find time to do a lot of things that are not done in your diary of engagements."

"Sure thing. I'd die if I did not."

"Cut out the few things that are likely to take you into unexpected dangers, like riding in the park, and such things."

"You mean for me to keep as much as possible between my office and here."

"Yes."

"But how am I to know what is happening at my office while I am here? And how am I to know what is happening here while I am at my office?"

"I will attend to that."

"How?"

"I will send Chick to you in the morning."

"Good!"

"I will send him to the office. I want you to install him at once as an extra secretary inside your private office, and to find an excuse to put your present secretary outside."

"What do you mean? Discharge him?"

"By no means. Simply move his desk into another room. Send for him when you want him, but do not go to him at all."

"And keep—what's his name?—Chick—in the office with me?"

"Always. Every minute of the time."

"But there are men who want to talk to me privately——"

"Let them wait, then, until this thing is over. Don't let anybody force Chick for one moment out of your sight."

"All right. That goes."

"Ride in a cab which I will provide for you——"

"What's the matter with my own?"

"——which I will provide for you, between your office and your house, and take Chick with you always. Treat him as a private secretary, and use him as often, too, if you wish; he is quite equal to it."

"Anything more?"

"Yes; I will send Patsy here to the house."

"Another assistant?"

"Yes; give him a chair at this desk, here in the library. Tell the butler to inform the servants that this is your new confidential secretary, and that he is to have the run of the entire house."

"Good."

"Give the order that he is to see everybody who comes to see you, add that he is to see them first; that he is to receive, personally, every letter or package which comes for you, and do not you touch anything unless he has first examined it."

"You would rather have him blown up than me, eh?"

"He won't be blown up and you might."

"I see."

"Chick will turn you over to Patsy in the evening and Patsy will turn you over to Chick in the morning. I will hold them both responsible for your well being. I'll guarantee that Mr. Dean, or anybody else, will have to be mighty slick if they get ahead of those two."

"Good! And I will feel as safe as a church."

"And you may. Only there is a part of it which you must fulfill, also."

"What is that?"

"You must not permit yourself to be called out, without first informing either one of my assistants who happens to be with you at the time."

"Rule one; go on."

"You must not receive a letter or a package which has not first been in the hands of one of them."

"Rule two; go on."

"You must not see or talk to any person who has not first been inspected by one of them."

"Rule three; any more?"

Nick smiled.

"There are three hundred others," he said, "but your common good sense will tell you what they are, for they are all very much like one, two and three. Do you think you can remember them?"

"You bet I can."

"And live up to them?"

"Yes."

"In that case I think that I can promise you immortality."

"And what are you going to be doing all this time? You seem to have left all the work to your assistants."

"Does look a little that way, doesn't it? Well, you figure on my keeping busy. I'll be sitting up and working around most of the time."

"That is what I supposed. Now, that disposes of the case. What do you intend to do about Morrison, the architect, and Forbes and Robertson, the contractors, who have disappeared so mysteriously?"

"I think I will look into their cases a little. In fact, that is the direct road in this matter."

"You agree with me, then, that Dean is doubtless behind their disappearance?"

"Yes; I think I do; but I will tell you more about it the next time we discuss the matter."

"When will that be?"

"As soon as there is anything to discuss."

"To-morrow night?"

"Perhaps. I'll see."

"Then I will find Chick at the office to-morrow morning?"

"No. You will find him here. I will send him here

to go to the office with you; also the cab that is to take you there."

"And Patsy, the other one?"

"I will telephone for him to come here now, so that I will give him his instructions in your presence. If Dean gets in his work on you, it won't be without the knowledge of one of my assistants or myself; you can bank on that."

The magnate heaved a great sigh.

"One thing is certain," he said; "you have made me feel a hundred per cent. better. I can sleep to-night without expecting that my bed will be blown up before I get out of it."

CHAPTER IV.

EXACTLY SIXTY HOURS.

At ten o'clock the following morning, Nick Carter was in consultation with Inspector McClusky at his office at police headquarters.

"That is the story," he said, in conclusion. "Now, when we closed that old affair of the bonds, Morrison, the architect, came here to headquarters with you, didn't he?"

"He certainly did."

"And Forbes and Robertson arrived in charge of some of your men, a little later?"

"About an hour later, I should say."

"You locked them up, of course."

"Certainly."

"And kept them here till when?"

"Well, it was approximately ten o'clock in the evening when the keys were turned on them."

"I should say about that."

"They were released at ten o'clock of the third morning after that."

"So they were here in your custody, exactly sixty hours."

"Exactly sixty hours; yes."

"Have you any idea what became of them after that?"

"None whatever. It wasn't up to me to keep tabs on them after that time."

"Certainly not. Did you see them or any of them when they were released?"

"No."

"Will you call the man here who did?"

The inspector rang the bell and ordered that Donovan be sent to the room at once.

"You are Donovan?" asked Nick, when he appeared.

"I am, sir."

"You remember Morrison, and Forbes and Robertson, who were here a month ago, and who were in your custody about sixty hours?"

"I do, sir."

"You released them when they went away?"

"I did, sir."

"Did you hear anyone of them express any sentiment at all which would give you an idea of where he or any of them intended to go?"

"Only one—Morrison. The others were as silent as mud turtles."

"What did Morrison have to say?"

"He said, 'well, here's for home,' when he went out of the door. That's all."

"How did they conduct themselves while they were here?"

"Morrison cried most of the time. Forbes swore most of the time, and Robertson—he just looked sulky. I don't think I heard the sound of his voice."

"So you could not give an opinion regarding the intention of any of them when they left your custody?"

"I could not, sir."

"That will do, Donovan; thank you."

Nick turned again to the inspector when Donovan had left the room.

"It is reasonably certain that they did not arrive at their homes whether they started for there or not," said. "True, I have not inquired of their families as yet; I shall do that at once; but it is not supposed that they went there, else why were the letters sent to Logan?"

"Possibly for a blind," remarked the inspector.

"I have thought of that."

"The unanimity of the letters——"

"And that also. The fact that the letters arrived at the same time might appear as if there were collusion among the three wives in writing about their respective husbands."

"It's worth looking into at least."

"It is possible," said Nick, "that while they were here, being in the same boat, so to speak, they may have cooked up a plan between them, for future action. Of course, they were not permitted to send out any notes?"

"Certainly not."

"Then if they did go home after they left here, the plans were laid after that."

"Sure."

"I'll take a run up to their houses."

"Good. Will you let me know about it, Nick?"

"Yes. I'll communicate with you at once, of course."

"Do you want any help in this matter? Do you want any of my men detailed on the case with you?"

"No; thank you. Not at the present moment. I do, I will not hesitate to ask for one."

"All right."

Half an hour later Nick was seated in the parlor at the residence of Philander Morrison, and in a few minutes after he entered it, Mrs. Morrison made her appearance.

"I have called," said Nick, "at the suggestion of Jared Logan, who has been greatly disturbed by

he received from you. He wished me to say to you that it is true that he called Mr. Morrison in connection with him, at the time you say he disappeared, if he has not seen him since. At the same time, if there is any way in which he can be of service in assisting you in the matter, his best efforts are at your disposal."

The detective could tell at a glance that the woman suffered. He realized, the instant he saw her, that she was no party to her husband's disappearance, and he had made the long announcement he did, in order to give her time to collect herself as soon as she knew the purpose of his call.

"Oh, sir!" she exclaimed. "You do not think that is——"

"Madam, I cannot form an opinion about the case until I know about it," interrupted the detective. "Suppose we begin at the right place."

"Yes, sir."

"When was it that you saw your husband last?"

"The evening of the fifteenth. He was reading in the library. I was entertaining some guests in the parlor."

"Well? And what happened then?"

"Some one came to the door, and my husband was led out on the steps. He was there five or perhaps ten minutes when he returned and came directly to me."

"And then——"

"I noticed, or thought I did, that he was excited. He said he was called out on urgent business."

"Did you ask him where?"

"Yes; he said to the house of Jared Logan. He thought he would not be gone more than an hour or so. I have not seen him since then."

"But you heard from him after that?"

"Yes."

"When?"

"About eleven or twelve o'clock that night."

"He sent a note to you?"

"Yes; by a messenger boy."

"What did he say in the letter?"

"He said that he was called out of town on business for Mr. Logan and that he might be absent two or three days, and for me not to worry."

"Have you heard from him since that time?"

"Not a word."

"And that was a month and two days ago, for to-day is the seventeenth."

"Yes, sir."

"Did you keep the letter he sent to you?"

"Yes, sir."

"Will you get it and let me see it?"

"Gladly, sir; although I have told you almost everything that was in it."

"Nevertheless, I would like to see it. By the way; before you go after the note, have you a personal acquaintance with Mrs. Forbes or Mrs. Robertson?"

"Merely an acquaintance; that is all. I had never seen either of them but once or twice until this terrible thing happened."

"And have you seen them often since that time?"

"I see them, or talk with them over the telephone every day now. We compare notes at the close of every day."

"Are their stories in effect the same as yours?"

"Precisely. There is no difference."

"Are they particular friends of each other? That is, were they so before this happened, do you think?"

"They are sisters, sir."

"Ah! Indeed! And they live in adjoining houses, do they not?"

"Yes."

"Now, if you will let me see that letter——"

It was placed in the detective's hands a moment

later, but it told him nothing more than he had already gleaned; and, as he gave it back to her, he said:

"Madam. I wish that I could assure you that your husband is safe, but I can only say that I believe he is. It is a great trial for you to face, but if you will have courage. I am confident that it will turn out all right."

"But where can my husband be, all this time? I am sure that something must have happened to him or he would at least have sent me word."

"Would you like me to tell you what I think has happened?"

"Oh, yes, sir, indeed I would."

"Remember, it is only an opinion; but—do you happen to know Mr. Dean? Daniel J. Dean?"

"Of course, I know who he is; but I do not know him."

"Do you know that your husband has had business dealings with him of late?"

"Yes; I know that."

"Very well, madam; it is possible—only possible, mind you, that Mr. Dean may know something about him."

"Why! How could that be, sir?"

"I will tell you; and then, if you follow my suggestions, we will soon know whether my surmise is correct or not. But I must ask you to keep entirely secret whatever I suggest."

CHAPTER V.

THE MAN ACROSS THE STREET—A CABLE FROM EUROPE.

An idea had suddenly occurred to Nick Carter, through which he saw his way clear to get at Daniel J. Dean without trouble or delay.

Ever since his talk with Mr. Logan the preceding evening he had cudgelled his brains for an excuse to approach the great Croesus—the great king of finance, and here, in the presence of this suffering woman, he saw his opportunity.

But he realized that he would be compelled to admit her to a certain extent to his confidence—that he must

make her, in part, at least, a confederate; and this resolved to do at once.

The short time he had been with her had been sufficient for him to determine that she was a woman of extraordinary character, capable of really great things if only the necessity for them should arise, and, sure the necessity was present now.

"Mrs. Morrison," he said, "do you think you could play a part, and, not only that, assist me to play another?"

"I don't understand you," she replied.

"I am a detective; perhaps you may have heard of me. I am Nick Carter."

"Indeed I have heard of you, Mr. Carter. Oh, I am so glad that you are here. If you will help me find my husband, I shall feel comforted at once."

"I will help you to find him, and I will find him if he is to be found."

"Then tell me what you wish me to do."

"And if I do so, will you agree to do it without question and without argument?"

"Yes, sir."

"Very well, then; that is a bargain."

"It is, sir."

"Then I must begin by taking you more or less into my confidence."

"Yes, sir. Your confidence will not be betrayed. I can promise you."

"I feel assured of that. You have said that you are aware of the fact that of late your husband has had some business dealings with old Dean."

"Yes, sir."

"Very well; now I happen to know that in connection with that business your husband became possessed of certain knowledge that was dangerous."

"Dangerous, sir?"

"Yes; that is the word. Dangerous because it was knowledge which Dean did not care to be in the possession of any living man but himself."

"Then you think that he has had my husband murdered?"

"Tut! Not so fast as that."

"Then what do you mean?"

"I mean that in order to feel assured that this knowledge would not be given to another, for a time at least, it is possible that Dean may have spirited your husband, and also his associates, the contractors, away for a time."

"I begin to understand. You do not mean that he would dare to have them killed, but that he might prefer to hold them prisoners somewhere, for a time."
"Exactly that."

Her lips tightened over her teeth and she was silent for a moment. Then she said:

"Tell me what to do and I will do it."

"Mind," said Nick, "I do not know that this is so. Only surmise that it may be so."

"I understand."

"If it is so, there is one way in which I think we may be able to discover the truth."

"What is that?"

"I would like you to take me with you to call upon Mr. Dean."

"You would like me to take you to call—really, is that not rather transposing the condition?"

"No; I mean literally what I say. I wish to get to the presence of Dean. I cannot think of a way to accomplish it without putting him wise, as a street boy would express the idea. It is quite natural that you should go to him on some pretext, and, if I know the man at all, I think there is not a doubt that he will see you."

"Very well."

"We will go to his house—not to his office. We will go there this evening."

"Yes."

"I will come here after you at eight o'clock—no, at seven—and I will be disguised so that you will not know me, but"—he took a card from his pocket, tore it in half, and gave one portion to her—"I will hand you this half of that card so that you will know there is no mistake."

"Yes; but——"

"We will go, then to call upon Mr. Dean. You will send in your card and he will receive you. I will be with you. You will introduce me as your brother."

"But I have no brother."

"Never mind that. He doesn't know if you have a dozen. You will say that I am from the country—wherever you please—and that I have come here to assist you in your trouble."

"And then——"

"Say to Dean that the last word you received from your husband was to the effect that he was going to see Dean; that he had business of the utmost importance with him; that he did not know how long he might be detained, but not above an hour or two; that he was afraid that unless he saw Dean at once, Dean would come down upon him hard; and that unfortunately he was in possession of a secret of Dean's which he must at once assure Dean that he would never betray, otherwise his life and liberty might be in danger. Now, do you understand that perfectly?"

"Perfectly."

"And can you do your part of it?"

"Yes, sir."

"While you are talking and Dean is replying, I will be looking on."

"I understand, sir."

"And when you have arrived at that point, you will cease to talk and let me do the rest of it for you."

"Very good, sir."

"If my surmise concerning Dean is the correct one, I think he will say or do something to betray himself during that interview."

"And we will go to-night?"

"I will call for you at seven o'clock."

"I will be ready."

"And in that case I do not think it is necessary for me to call upon either Mrs. Forbes or Mrs. Robertson; at least, not at present."

"You know best, sir."

"And if, by chance, either of them should call you up on the phone, or should call here, you are to say nothing whatever of me, or of any effort that is being made to trace your husband or theirs."

"I will remember."

Nick took his leave then; but when he reached the

steps and was about to pass down them to the street, he encountered a messenger boy, who was at that moment fastening his bicycle to the gate post preparatory to ringing the bell of that particular house.

"What is it, boy?" he asked.

"Cable, sir," replied the boy. "Cable for Mrs. Philander Morrison."

Nick took the message from the boy and passed it to her, for she had followed him to the door. Then, while she broke the seal, he signed the book and dismissed the boy.

As he did so he heard a glad cry from the woman behind him.

"It is all right," she said. "I have heard from him."

"Indeed!" said Nick. "Let me see what he has to say."

Then he took the message in his hand and read:

"Am sailing for home to-day. Arrive eight days."

It was signed Philander Morrison.

"I am afraid, madam, that I would not put too much confidence in that cable. It could easily be ordered from the other side by a man with the power that Dean possesses. I do not say that it is not from your husband, but I think we will make the call this evening, just the same; and during that call you will forget that you have received this. Now, oblige me in another matter."

"Yes, sir."

"Without altering your position, look over my shoulder at a man you will see passing slowly down the street on the other side. Do you see him?"

"Yes."

"Have you ever seen him before?"

"Yes; often. He has loitered along that side of the street for the last week. I think he is a new boarder in the house with the marble steps. He sits on those steps and smokes, half the time."

"Quite likely. I happen to know him. He belongs to a private detective agency that is not particular as to the character of their cases, and his business consists in watching this house."

"Do you think so?"

"Without a doubt. If you will watch him from behind your curtain you will understand the truth of what I say."

"I will do so."

"Very good. I will go now. I will keep this cable if you don't mind."

"And you will be here at seven?"

"At seven sharp. Remember, the other half of the card I gave you will identify me; otherwise you might not wish to admit me."

At the corner Nick turned, but he stopped the instant he had passed out of sight around it.

Then he walked quite slowly, a distance of three or four rods, while all the time he was busily engaged in making alterations in his general appearance; and when at length he did turn about again, even Mrs. Morrison would not have recognized him, had he applied again at her door.

But it was not her door that was his destination now. In fact, he had none; but as he descended the steps of her house, he had seen a closed carriage turn into the avenue from the corner below, and he had seen it drive up to the curb and stop there, in obedience to a signal from the man he had pointed out to Mrs. Morrison.

Just now he wished to know the business of the vehicle; but even he had no thought what it really was.

CHAPTER VI.

NICK CARTER'S UNIQUE METHODS OF WORK.

As Nick Carter turned back into the street where the Morrison residence was located, he saw the carriage start away again, turn the corner and disappear, and for a moment he thought that he might have been mistaken after all; but he was given to following his first impressions about things, and, as the shyster detective seemed to be content to remain where he was for the present, Nick thought it would do no harm if he was to wait also.

He knew perfectly well that the detective he had

noticed would be lynx-eyed for everything that happened in the street, and that if he appeared to loiter, he would be noticed at once, so he had recourse to an expedient, but, nevertheless, a good one.

He ran up the steps of the first house he came to and rang the bell.

It happened to be one of those houses where the bell is not answered quickly, and so quite five minutes passed before it was answered.

Then he inquired for a name which he felt assured would not be the names of the people who really lived there, and upon being informed that no such names were known at that house he apologized for disturbing them, descended the steps, and walked three houses farther down, when he repeated the experiment.

In this way he not only killed time, but he fooled the detective who waited on the steps of the house where Mrs. Morrison had said he lived.

As Nick was in the act of ringing a bell for the third time, the carriage reappeared.

It turned into the street as it had done in the first place, and now it drove rapidly along, without hindrance or signal from the man on the steps, until it arrived opposite the Morrison house, when it turned up the curb and stopped.

"Ha! I thought likely," mused Nick.

A man descended from the carriage, mounted the steps of the Morrison residence, and rang the bell, and Nick smiled broadly when he recognized in that person the so-called superintendent of the same agency to which the man on the steps belonged.

"Good!" he said. "I think I see the game now."

However, he did not move. He waited where he was, for further developments.

Presently they happened.

Mrs. Morrison, who had evidently been watching through the curtain, as Nick had suggested, came to the door in person.

Nick, of course, was not near enough to overhear any of the conversation which passed between her and her caller, but he could see that she gave a start of surprise when she listened to the first words he uttered.

Then, for a moment she seemed to parley, and then

suddenly to decide upon some point that appeared to be of importance.

She went into the house and closed the door, while the man, who had summoned her, waited on the steps outside.

"I wonder if she is fool enough to swallow their bait," mused Nick. "I put her down as rather a smart woman; still, she is so anxious—I wonder if it is best for me to interfere, or to let her go her way and follow where they lead? The trouble is that I can't follow without being headed off by that fellow on the steps."

He thought a moment and then he smiled broadly.

"Yes," he said to himself. "There is one way. It is rather heroic, but it will do the business, and I think I will do it."

While he cogitated in this way, the woman, Mrs. Morrison, reappeared.

This time she was dressed for the street, and without hesitation she descended the steps and entered the carriage.

Not a word had been uttered which Nick could hear, and he pondered over what excuse might have been brought to her to induce her to enter the carriage and to drive away with a stranger.

"If it weren't for that cable," he mused, "I should think it the old and stale expedient of sending a forged letter to say that her husband wants her; but such a thing wouldn't work with her at all since the receipt of that cable, nor would Morrison's enemies resort to it when they know that she must have the cable by this time—that is, of course, if they sent it, and I am satisfied that they did that."

The man who had brought the message—whatever it was—to Mrs. Morrison, entered the carriage with her. The driver touched the horses with the whip, and they started away.

In the meantime, Nick Carter had not been idle.

He had moved, step by step, farther down the street until, just at the instant when the carriage started away, he was within six feet of the steps whereon the slyster detective was seated.

The starting of the carriage was Nick Carter's signal to act.

With a quick bound he turned and leaped upon the steps.

With a motion that was almost simultaneous with the spring, he seized the man by the throat with his left hand, while with his other he struck him a quick, knock-out blow on the point of his chin.

It was the sort of blow which pugilists claim does not hurt, but only stuns; all the same, it is advisable for the readers not to experiment with them unless they are prepared for headaches.

Whether this particular blow hurt or not, it certainly stunned, for the fellow lay back against the steps without a sigh or a sound.

He did not so much as move after Nick's knuckles came in contact with his chin—and Nick Carter did not wait to see whether he did or not.

His purpose was accomplished.

He did not wish the man to know that he was watching that carriage or that he intended to follow it, and so, in order to carry out the deception and to keep it alive when the man's senses should return, Nick deftly helped himself to the fellow's watch and chain, and hurried after the carriage.

"I can return the watch and chain at my leisure," he muttered, as he dashed down the street. "In the meantime, its absence will explain to that chump why he was touched on the jaw—that is, it will explain it the way I wish it explained."

The carriage was now driving rapidly, and Nick was obliged to do some sprinting not to lose sight of it after it turned the corner.

However, he did not; and, fortunately, when he did turn the corner to discover that it was yet within his range of vision, he also discovered a hansom cab, disengaged, trundling slowly through the street.

"Here you go for a five-dollar fee," he said to the astonished cabby, leaping upon the step and pointing toward the fleeing carriage. "Keep that closed carriage in sight without permitting its driver to know that you are doing it, and you get a five spot besides your regular fare."

Five spots do not grow on cabmen's whiskers, and he had to say no more.

The hansom was turned as if it were on a pivot, and it dashed after the carriage so quickly that there was no perceptible pause in Nick's chase; and now he settled himself back in the seat, lighted a cigar, and took things easy, for he could keep the carriage that contained Mrs. Morrison in sight without any difficulty.

He was rather surprised a moment later, however, to see it turn into Fifth Avenue and so to start uptown instead of in the other direction, which he had expected it to take.

"I cannot even guess what inducement they could have offered her to enter that carriage," he mused. "It must have been a good one."

There was, however, a greater surprise still in store for him presently, for after a drive of almost half an hour, the carriage drew up in front of no less a place than the residence of that great personage, Daniel J. Dean himself.

"Whew!" whistled Nick. "This is getting interesting. I wonder if old Dean can be home at this hour and if he is, what in the world he happens to want of Mrs. Morrison. I would not be surprised if the old reprobate will end by supplying the very clew he is trying so hard to conceal."

When the carriage came to a stop, the man got out of it first, and then turned and assisted Mrs. Morrison to alight, while the cab in which Nick was seated drew up at the curb and waited.

Watching, Nick saw her mount the steps; saw the door of the residence swing open to admit her before she was halfway to it; saw her enter and saw the door close behind her.

"I'd give a big, red apple to know what is about to happen in that house," mused the detective; "to know what old Dean, or whoever is to represent him, will say to her during the next five minutes. One thing is quite certain: He cannot mean to keep her there or — But, hold on! I'm not so sure of that."

The man who had been message bearer and companion to Mrs. Morrison on the drive, now re-entered his own vehicle and drove away.

"You may go," mused the detective. "I know where and how to find you whenever I want you, and

CHAPTER VII.

A WOMAN'S SHREWDSNESS.

"I should not wonder if I could find a way to make a talk, too. It is more than likely that I'll make a go of it, anyhow, before long. Just now, my duty here."

"Where to now, sir?" asked his own driver at that creature.

"Nowhere, just at present. Do you think you can find it?" replied Nick.

"The boss kin find it if I can't," chuckled the driver.

"There ain't no place in the city he likes so well to look for, providing you don't make him move out of his socks while he's doin' it."

"All right. Stand where you are till I tell you to move."

"Yes, sir."

Two solid hours passed in this manner, during which there was no sign of anybody around the residence of Daniel Dean.

But then, when two hours had passed, the front door opened and a man came out.

One glance at him was sufficient to assure Nick that it was Dean's valet, and that he was bent on an errand of importance.

"Cable," he called, "keep that fellow in sight. If he gets on a car, follow the car. If he gets off again, follow him. Don't lose him; and say!"

"Yes, sir."

"If he happens to cross the street in front of you where there aren't too many people around, and you manage to knock him down without hurting him very much, do it."

"Do you mean that, sir?"

"Mean it? Of course I mean it."

"All right, sir. I'll see what can be done. Is it worth another five spot?"

"Two more, if you don't break any bones, or hurt no much."

"Then consider it done, if the cove crosses the street."

And two blocks farther down it was done exactly Nick had wished.

They had passed down Fifth Avenue to the Plaza, across it and into Fifty-eighth Street when the opportunity came.

The man they were following suddenly darted out into the street and attempted to cross it, and he did so at a moment when the cab was almost abreast of him.

It was the opportunity which the cabman had waited for.

He brought his whip down with a sharp blow upon his horse, and the animal, a spirited one, leaped forward at the cruel lash.

And then the cabman exhibited his cunning.

With a deft twist of the wrist, he turned his horse so that the animal's shoulder came into violent contact with the pedestrian, with the result that he was thrown from his feet to the pavement, and only for the expertness of the driver must have been trodden beneath the hoofs of the horse.

At almost the instant the horse struck the man, Nick Carter was out of the cab beside him.

"Are you hurt?" he inquired, and there was real anxiety in his voice, for he really feared lest the experiment might have cost the man a broken bone or two.

Then, before the man could reply, Nick lifted him in his arms and bore him to the cab.

"Whether you are hurt or not," he said, "I will see you safely to your destination now. No bones are broken, I see."

"My shoulder is bruised," said the man, as Nick helped him into the cab.

"I'll plaster that with ten-dollar bill, my man, besides taking you to your destination. Do you think that will cure it?"

"It ought to, sir. I'm much obliged, I'm sure. Most people would have driven on without stopping to ask questions."

"Well, I'm not that sort," replied Nick.

With the deftness of the most expert of pickpockets, Nick searched the valet while he was assisting him into the cab; that is, he searched the pockets where

the man would be likely to carry a letter—and he found it.

In the second pocket into which the detective introduced his fingers, he discovered the letter, for he had been confident from the start that the man had been sent out to deliver one.

Without a qualm of conscience, Nick relieved him of it, and transferred it to his own.

"Now, my man," he said, when they were seated side by side, "where would you like me to put you down?"

The valet gave the address of Philander Morrison.

"Ah!" said Nick. "The architect."

"Yes, sir. That is the man."

"I happen to know him. He is out of town, I think."

"Well, sir, I don't know anything about that. I am only to leave a letter there and to return to my employer."

The mention of the letter led Nick to fear that the valet might feel in his pocket to discover if he had it safely, so he hastened to produce the ten-dollar bill he had promised.

For a moment the detective seemed to hesitate with the bill in his hand, and then he remarked, as if speaking to himself:

"I wonder if another five dollars would——"

"What is that, sir?" eagerly asked the valet.

"I was thinking," said Nick. "You are not much hurt."

"Really not at all, sir."

"And I have an important engagement."

"Yes, sir."

"Now, if I were to add five dollars to this ten, and were to put you down here instead of taking you all the way to your destination, do you think that you would feel compensated for the inconvenience to which you have been subjected?"

"Well, sir. If you'll promise not to hurt me any more than you have done now, you may run over me every day in the week at the same price."

"Ha! ha!" exclaimed Nick, with a good imitation of a hearty laugh. "Not bad that. You're a right good fellow, I suspect; however, I don't care to go

through the experience every day if you don't. I shouldn't wonder if it really hurt me worse than it hurt you."

"I'm quite sure that it did, sir."

"Then here are the fifteen dollars. I will drop you here."

"Very good, sir."

Two minutes later the valet was hurrying down the street intent upon delivering a letter which Nick Carter, safely in the cab, and driving rapidly in the opposite direction, was at that moment engaged reading.

And talk about surprises!

"I'll have to admit," mused Nick, pausing for a moment in the reading, "that the best of us get taken in at times. I was right, however, when I said that she was a smart woman. It is certain that she fooled me all right."

Here is the letter he read:

"MY DARLING PHIL: As you know, Mr. Dean sent for me, and we both thought it best that I should go and see what he wanted. I am here in his house and he is waiting while I write this note. He is to read it and read it when it is finished. He knows that you are still in the city—that you have not disappeared. How he knows it I have no idea; but he does. He assures me that if I will send for you and induce you to come here and talk with him, that neither you nor I need fear any but the pleasantest consequences. He merely wants us both to go to Australia to live, and he will supply money enough to keep us in luxury as long as we live; and he threatens all sorts of things if you do not come. So, I say come, and come at once. You know how to get here without being discovered. I need not suggest anything on that score now. I have consented to remain here at Mr. Dean's till you come as a sort of hostage, so do not be too long in getting here, as I wish to be at home at seven o'clock in order to keep an important engagement."

"Missus."

It is not surprising that Nick Carter omitted several very distinct whistles while he perused that note.

"Humph!" he said; and looked at the letter again. Then at the envelope.

It had been imperfectly sealed, so that the detective easily pulled it open. The address was also written plainly on the back of it, although, instead of being addressed to Philander Morrison, as it should have been, the name upon it was "John Lawson."

"Evidently Mr. Morrison is acting as his own butler," thought the detective.

Then for a moment he was lost in deep thought, and then suddenly a smile broke over his face.

"Cabby," he called.

"Yes, sir."

"Do you remember that corner where you picked me up?"

"Sure, sir."

"Try and see how quickly you can get me there now. I don't wait to ask questions, but go."

Cabby had a good horse, and he proved it.

They dashed down the street at a rate of speed which threatened to get the police after them, but fortunately they escaped that experience.

"Wait here," said Nick; and he leaped out and trotted through the street on foot toward the house of Philander Morrison.

"Now, if I could meet that valet, it would be great," he thought, "and I think I am here first."

As he walked up the street he looked in every direction for the man he had knocked senseless, but that individual had disappeared.

"Evidently he had enough of it," thought Nick. "He does not fear any immediate interruption from his valet and so he has gone off to nurse his hurt with a few drinks. Later, he will swear that he did not leave his post for a minute. And still later he will find his valet waiting for him at his office, and wonder how he got there. Hello! There is my worthy friend, the valet, turning the corner. Now, when he discovers that he has lost the letter, what will he do? Will he turn around and start for home, or will he ring the bell? I think I won't take any chances in this game now. I will give him the letter before he has a chance to decide the question."

The detective had closed and resealed the flap of the envelope, so that it did not show that it had been dis-

turbed; and now he raised it aloft and waved it at the approaching valet.

Presently they came together on the street and the recognition seemed to be mutual.

"Here, my man," said Nick, holding the letter out in his hand. "You dropped this in my cab. It might be important, you know, so I hurried after you. Here it is."

"Oh, sir! How can I ever thank——"

"Tush! Never mind that. If you were my man, and had a letter to deliver, I should wish you to deliver it. That is all. It was my fault that you were run down, you know, and your employer might have blamed you for it. As it is, nobody is to blame, if you choose not to mention the circumstance when you return."

"No fear of my mentioning it, sir, now that I've got it again. It is not necessary, is it, sir?"

"Certainly not."

Nick Carter returned to his cab.

"Cabby," he said.

"Yes, sir."

"You are a good driver. I'm going to keep my contract with you now, and at the same time make another one. Here is your money."

"Yes, sir. Thank you, sir."

"Can you skip away from here now, secure a closed hack and a fresh horse, as good as this one, and be back here in about four seconds?"

"Hardly that, sir. But I can do it in fifteen minutes."

"Then do it. You won't lose any money by the transaction—unless you happen to mention the fact that you have this job; in that case you will not only lose your job, but you are likely to take home a broken jaw as well. I've got work for you, cabby. I want to capture one more man between this and dark; and, cabby, I want you to drive to my house as soon as we get him."

"Yes, sir. Who——"

"And, cabby, I'm Nick Carter. Now, skip!"

CHAPTER VIII.

ONE VILLAIN IS UNMASKED.

"You are a minute and a half late, cabby," said Nick, when the hack drew up at the corner where he awaited it.

"I hope, sir, that I am not too late."

"No; you are in plenty of time. Now, listen. Get off of your box and come here."

"Yes, sir; here I am."

"Do you see that house with the vines trailing over the front of it?"

"I do, sir."

"I want you to stand with your hack so that you can watch the door of that house, and so that I, inside the hack, can see it at the same time. Do you understand?"

"Yes, sir."

"That fellow you knocked down in the street a little while ago has just delivered a letter at that house. After a while a man will come out of it. I haven't the least idea how he will look, but it is not likely that more than one man is there at all, so only one can come out of it."

"Yes, sir."

"I'll rap on the glass if I see him first; if you see him first, you rap."

"Yes, sir."

"Then I want you to drive up quickly and overtake him soon after he passes the next corner."

"After he has turned the corner, sir?"

"Yes; and not until then, either."

"And what then, sir?"

"Drive right up alongside of him and stop. Speak to him if necessary; only make him stop long enough for me to get to him."

"The point is that I do not wish to attract attention from others."

"I understand, sir."

"Do you know where I live?"

"Better life I do, sir."

"Very well. When I get the man inside the cab, don't wait for instructions, but drive there as soon as you can."

After that a half hour passed in silent waiting; and then, from the position he occupied Nick saw a man appear on the steps of the house he was watching.

He appeared to be an old man, quite bent with age, although when he ran down the steps, he did so with light grace which belied his looks.

"He's not much good at living up to a disguise," muttered the detective, as he tapped on the glass.

At the same instant the cab started.

The driver, so thoroughly instructed, carried out his directions to the letter, and when Philander Morrison passed the corner and turned it, the hack drew up beside him.

"Hi, there!" shouted the driver.

But if he expected the call to bring Morrison to a stop, he was mistaken. Instead, the architect leaped away and would have run had not Nick Carter held him too quick for him.

The detective had the door on the latch and ready, and the instant the hack halted, he leaped to the ground, so that when the driver spoke his hand was already against the architect's shoulder.

That one leap was all he took, for he was brought around with a sharp turn so that he stood facing the detective.

"What does this mean, sir?" he sputtered, attempting the indignant.

"I wish to have a talk with you, Morrison," replied Nick, coolly. "I am Nick Carter, although I do not look exactly as I did the last time we met. Will you get into the hack quietly and come with me, or shall we be compelled to use force?"

"Am I under arrest?"

"You will be, mighty soon, if you do not obey me without question."

"Very well; I will go."

In another moment they were in the hack together and driving rapidly toward Nick Carter's house.

"That is rather an original sort of a joke you have been playing, isn't it?" asked the detective.

"What joke do you mean? I don't understand you."

"Don't you? Perhaps you will understand me better a little later on."

"What are you going to do with me?" asked Morrison.

"Just now I'm going to take you to my house."

"What for?"

"To see if I can induce you to answer a few questions I shall ask about Mr. Daniel J. Dean."

"I have told you once all that I know about him."

"Have you, indeed? We will see about that. Where are you going now?"

"For exercise."

"Had you no destination in view?"

"None whatever."

"Where is your wife?"

"My wife? What has she got to do with——"

"Where is she?"

"She has gone for a ride."

"Where?"

"In the park."

"What a consummate liar you are, Morrison!"

"Well," doggedly, "if you know the answers better than I do, why do you ask questions?"

"Merely to prove that you are a liar."

"You have no right to arrest me without a warrant."

"I'll take the right, then."

"What are you going to do with me?"

"Lock you up."

"Where?"

"In my house."

"What for?"

"So that I will know where you are while I do your errand for you."

"Do my errand for me? What do you mean?"

"I mean that I will make that call for you."

"What call?"

"Upon our mutual acquaintance, Mr. Dean."

Morrison laughed outright.

"So you thought I was going to see Dean, did you?"

"No; I know you were."

"You are off your base, Nick Carter."

"Oh, I guess not. I'll take chances, anyway, and make the call."

"You won't get in."

"Won't I? Why not?"

"You'll see."

"Morrison," said Nick, calmly, "when you were mixed up in that bond business, I only thought that you were a good man gone wrong for once, and I felt sorry for your wife. Now, I know that you are a scoundrel clear through."

"Damn you, Carter——"

"Hush, or I'll hurt you! You are a scoundrel clear through. You haven't a redeeming quality, as far as I can see, and you have done the worst thing a man could do, for you have forced your wife to become an abettor in your villainy."

"Well, what are you going to do about it?" asked Morrison, sullenly.

"I'm going to send you to Sing Sing before I am through with you—even if old Dean and all the others have to go there with you."

"They will have to."

"That remains to be seen."

"You're right it does."

"Where are your friends?" asked Nick, suddenly.

"What friends?"

"Forbes and Robertson?"

"Find out."

"I will find out. Don't give yourself any worry on that point. Here we are. Climb out, now, and walk into the house quietly. Don't try any monkey shins. I haven't taken the trouble to see if you have any weapons about you, but if you so much as make a move to use one, you'll think that the Flatiron building has fallen on top of you."

Inside the house, Nick conducted his prisoner to the top floor and into a room which he kept prepared for the reception of just such individuals.

There was an iron belt in that room, with a padlock on it, and this belt was fastened to the wall by a chain and staple. Before Morrison realized what was happening, the belt was locked around his waist and he was chained to the wall.

"Would you chain me up like a dog?" he demanded, fiercely.

"Looks like it, doesn't it?" rejoined Nick.

"I'll get even with you for this."

"It strikes me that you have been trying rather hard to get even with me as well as with other people I know for a month past."

Without waiting for an answer, Nick stretched forth one hand and unceremoniously pulled the wig and beard from the head and face of his prisoner. Then he left the room, and presently returned with an extra suit of clothes.

"I'll trouble you to take off what you have on, and dress yourself in these—unless you prefer to remain undressed," he said.

"What are you going to do?" demanded Morrison.

"I'm going to perform an old trick of mine. I am going to make myself up to look so much like you that your own wife will not know the difference, if she doesn't get too close to me. Then, on top of that, I'll put on the disguise you have just worn so awkwardly; and after that, Morrison, I'm going to Daniel Dean's in order to answer in person the very tender note your wife just sent to you from there."

CHAPTER IX.

THE FURY OF A WOMAN.

Readers of the Nick Carter adventures are familiar with many of the great detective's talents, one of which was that, with a few moments' practice, he could imitate almost any voice to such a degree of perfection as to deceive the most intimate associates of that person—for a time.

Another was his ability with the make-up.

Given the size and figure, and he could so transform himself that it was an easy matter for him to represent almost any person he wished.

In the case of Morrison, the size and figure were almost the same, and with a little deft padding here and there, it was made to appear exactly the same, from head to foot.

To copy the man's face was an easy matter for the detective, and the prisoner himself gasped with sur-

prise as he watched the gradual transformation which the detective wrought, until an observer looking into the room would have thought there were twin brothers there, or that there were two Philander Morrisons in the world.

From the moment when Nick mentioned the letter, however, Morrison had not spoken at all.

He lapsed into a sullen silence from which the bantering of the detective could not rouse him at all; and he remained so to the last, deigning no remark when the detective at last withdrew from the room, and started to make his call upon Daniel Dean.

It was five o'clock in the afternoon when he finally appeared at the house, and he was on the point of ringing the bell when the door was opened and he was bidden to enter.

It was the same valet who had carried the note who admitted him, and he looked none the worse for having been knocked down in the street by a cab; doubtless he still could feel the heat of that fifteen-dollar plaster that had been applied to his wounds.

He pointed silently at a door at the end of the hall, and thither Nick Carter strode, with the stooping walk which Morrison had assumed in the disguise as his own butler.

As he entered the room, Mrs. Morrison started forward toward him, but it was evidently not for the purpose of embracing him, as Nick feared for an instant.

"What a fool you are, Morrison!" she exclaimed, with fine scorn. "You wear a disguise like a hobby horse. Any fool could tell that it is a disguise."

"I suppose so," replied Nick. "However, I do the best I can."

"So," she said, "you have decided to adopt the humble, have you? You could read between the lines of that little note of mine, could you? I told Mr. Dean that there was no use in fooling with you any longer."

All this was rather in the nature of a surprise to the detective. He had not expected just that sort of greeting, and he did not know what reply to make, so he wisely decided to appear surly and to say nothing unless he was compelled to do so.

He could see old Daniel Dean seated in a big chair

in the corner, rubbing his cold hands together constantly, and smiling with that insupportable expression which there was no suggestion of mirth.

"You did not hurry, it seems," continued Mrs. Morrison; and Nick wondered if, after all, she really was Mrs. Morrison. He was beginning to feel doubts upon that point.

"I came as soon as it was possible to do so," he retorted, in a low tone.

"It is a wonder that you came at all, knowing why you were sent for," she retorted.

"But I don't know why I was sent for," said Nick, coldly.

"Oh, don't you? So, you're going to try that game, are you?"

"I'm not playing any game."

"Bah! It was only this morning that you said that you were playing a game for millions, and that you could win out, or that the whole push would go under with you."

"Well; I meant it all right, all right."

"Oh, you did!"

"Yes, I did."

"Suppose you listen to what Mr. Dean has to say on that point."

"I haven't heard him say anything so far," retorted Nick, turning partly around so that he faced the multi-millionaire.

"You will find that I have very little to say," said Dean, coldly.

"That won't be any new discovery," said Nick.

"I have made up my mind that I will not be bled by you any longer, Morrison," said Dean, with more animation than he had shown before. "You have never undertaken to do a thing for me in which you have not miserably failed, and you think because you have got certain documents and a signed confession of mine in your hands, that you can defy me. The time has come when you can do so no longer."

"You think so," said Nick. "Perhaps I do not."

Again the old man smiled.

"You have yet to find out the full power of money, Morrison," he said.

"I've been trying hard enough to find it out for some time. I ought to come pretty near to knowing before long."

The old man cackled a dry laugh.

"You have had your last chance," he said, and there was a strange menace in his remark which the detective tried in vain to fathom.

"How is that?" he asked.

"You will never have another chance. That is what I mean."

"Still I do not understand you."

"Shall I put it in plain words which you cannot fail to understand?"

"Yes; I wish you would."

"You will please to understand, before I go on, that it will be useless for you to attempt to escape from this house, or even from this room. I have prepared against such an undertaking."

Nick shrugged his shoulders.

"This night will see the last of my enemies. Minnie, here, is through with you forever. She says she never had any use for you anyway, and that she is tired of pretending she is the wife of a man who hasn't courage enough to kill a fly."

Nick turned his eyes toward the woman and saw that she was laughing.

"Go on," he said to Dean. "You are doing the talking; I'm not."

"There are only four people alive in the world to-day who have given me cause to fear them; only four for whom I feel fear, and consequently only four whom I hate. You know who and what they are as well as I."

Nick nodded. He preferred to hear the old man mention the names.

"They are Forbes and Robertson, yourself and Jared Logan."

"And," interrupted Nick, with sudden inspiration, "no matter who it is you hate the most, it is certain that you fear Jared Logan more than all the others put together."

But the years which Daniel Dean had passed in amassing his millions had also schooled his temper into perfect control; and he did not alter the expression of

his expressionless face, nor change the tone of his voice as he replied:

"There is no doubt of that, Morrison."

"Well, why have you induced me to come here now?" asked Nick, dryly, still playing the part of Philander Morrison with consummate skill.

"To offer you, as I have said, your last chance."

"Suppose you put that offer into words."

"Is that necessary?"

"It would seem so, since I demand it."

"I want that confession which you once made me sign; that confession which you burned out of me with your horrible electric light, when I would have defied a pistol or a knife, but——"

Nick laughed aloud, for he caught his cue direct this time.

"But when you did not dare to defy the terrible light, which would have burned a hole through your dried-up old carcass much quicker than a bullet would have pierced it. Well, go on. You are not through yet."

"I want that confession. I want the other papers of mine that are in your possession. I want your signature to a written statement which I have had drawn up. I want your abject obedience to the terms I shall make—and then, you may go scot-free, with a million dollars in cash on your person. After the papers are turned over to me, and the conditions I shall make have been complied with, you will be given the million dollars in cash and you will be escorted on board the ship which will take you direct from here to Australia, where you are to remain until you die."

"Beautiful," said Nick, with fine sarcasm. "Do you suppose that I do not see into your game? Do you suppose that the ship on which I sailed would ever arrive at the other side of the world? A man who could give me a million dollars, could give somebody else two millions to get rid of me. Australia, in my case, would be located at the other side of eternity. But we will let that pass for the present. Tell me what you are to do with Forbes and Robertson?"

For a moment the old man was silent; and then he chuckled softly to himself.

"Truly," he said, "that is a sorry joke. I hope, for your sake, that the devil, who now has them in his keeping, will mark it down to your credit, and be inclined to leniency with you because of it, when you get in his hands yourself."

"And Jared Logan?" asked Nick, ignoring the breach he had made, and changing the subject as quickly as possible so that no more could be made of it. Still, even as he spoke, he realized that the woman, Minnie, had started forward toward him with a new interest in the conversation, and he knew that it was her he had to fear rather than the old man before him.

Daniel Dean chuckled audibly.

"The house of Logan will go out of existence to-night," he said. "You need not trouble yourself about him. To-morrow he will be beyond fearing—he and all who belong to him—he and all his power to injure me will be beyond the——"

"Hush!" said the woman.

As she spoke, she stepped forward with a quick gesture and tore the false beard from the detective's face, but as the reader knows, Nick had made up even under the beard and wig so that he so exactly resembled Morrison, that she was still, for an instant, deceived.

But it was only for an instant, and during that time she continued to gaze with flashing eyes upon the detective.

Then, suddenly and without warning, she uttered a sharp cry and leaped toward him. Her right hand flew out and struck him sharply in the face, as she cried out:

"You fraud! You scoundrel! You are not Morrison at all! I knew it from the first. You are a detective! I know you! You are Nick Carter!"

CHAPTER X.

"A MIGHTY LUCKY GUESS FOR ALL."

It was said at the close of the last chapter that the woman's hand struck Nick Carter in the face, but that statement is not entirely correct, for the blow did not reach his face, although it was totally unexpected.

Instead of that his own hand flew up and caught her the wrist, and then she was forced slowly but surely her knees, while all the time the detective kept his eyes fixed upon the old man, who had started to his feet with a cry of amazement.

"Dean!" cried the woman. "Dean! He is not Morrison! He is Nick Carter! If you value your life and mine, never let him escape!"

And now the old man was standing upright.

He tottered as he stood there, but whether from weakness, or from terror, or from eagerness, it is impossible to say.

"Come!" he called out; and then, as if it were a pre-arranged signal, the three doors which opened into the apartment flew wide ajar, simultaneously, and through one of them two men stepped into the room.

Of the six men who thus suddenly appeared in view, three held leveled rifles in their grasp, the muzzles of which covered Nick Carter's heart; and the remaining three were similarly armed, only that they each pressed two revolvers instead, so that there were nine deadly weapons pointed at the detective, and he knew well that at a signal from the old millionaire nothing could stay those bullets from piercing his life.

He still grasped the woman's wrist, and now he drew her toward him and enveloped her in his arms, holding her close against him as his surest means of protection.

"Command them to shoot, if you will," he said, calmly, to her; and she, thoroughly frightened now that she saw her own danger, called out hysterically to Daniel Dean:

"Don't let them shoot, for God's sake! Don't you say that they will kill me also if they do so? Don't let them shoot!"

The old man grinned devilishly.

"Yes, I see," he cackled. "It makes a pretty picture. It also affords a great opportunity: One which I cannot, in my heart, find an excuse for neglecting. I care for Morrison later on, but I am afraid that Miss Minnie will be the most difficult of all to rid myself of. Truly this is a great opportunity."

He paused and smiled at them, almost benignantly, and then, stepping back hastily against the wall, he said, sharply:

"Shoot!"

But Nick Carter had not lost a motion that the old man made.

He had seen that devilish gleam come into the millionaire's eyes. He had noticed the expression of gloating exultation which swept across his face when the woman cried out to him not to shoot, and he saw that the crafty old villain instantly discovered a means of ridding himself of her as well as of him.

Therefore he was, in a measure, prepared for the order to fire.

So many times in his life had the detective dodged bullets, that the game was not new to him.

Just as the pugilist in a fight watches the eyes of his opponent instead of his hands, so Nick Carter watched old Daniel Dean.

He saw and read correctly the changing expressions as they swept across his face; he saw him as he deliberately thought over the chances of having two persons killed instead of one, and he read the decision when it appeared in the cold glitter of those usually expressionless eyes.

He knew then that the bullets were coming. He knew that only a word was needed to speed them on their way, and that the word was trembling on the old man's tongue, ready for utterance; and he watched with all that nicety of deliberation and that directness of perception for which he was famed.

He knew that before the order was given, the old man would start back more out of range of the bullets, and he waited for that instant.

Then, when the old man did start back against the wall—just at the instant when he began that motion, Nick Carter also moved.

As Dean's lips parted to give the order to shoot, the detective tightened his grasp upon the woman, and as the word was uttered, he kicked her feet from under her, at the same time throwing out his own, so that they crashed to the floor together at the very instant

that the firearms were discharged, almost with one report.

To a spectator, it would have appeared as if the bullets had pierced the two who were standing there covered by the weapons.

Indeed, it evidently appeared so to old Dean himself, for he started forward with a cry of exultation, and in such haste that he did not perceive that he had placed himself directly between his hired murderers and their intended victim.

Nick Carter remained perfectly still where he had fallen, and for an instant he wondered why the woman whom he had dragged down with him, in order to save her as well as himself from the bullets, also remained quiet.

But even as the thought that perhaps one or more of the bullets had struck her occurred to him, she seemed to recover her senses. With a quick wrench she pulled herself free from his grasp and struggled to her feet, and then, two of the hired assassins, who were at one side of the room, so that they could fire at her without danger of hitting Dean, fired again and Minnie pitched forward on her face across the silent body of the detective, who was still feigning death.

Those second shots—those which really killed the woman, Minnie, filled the old man with terror. For an instant he believed that his men had actually fired at him, and he was almost beside himself with rage and fright.

"Go!" he yelled at them. "Get out of here and out of the house! Go! You have done the work for which I paid you, now begone. Go, curse you! Go!"

The men did not require a second bidding. They departed as they came, closing the doors behind them, and then, as the old man turned to look upon the deadly work which had been done at his bidding, Nick Carter cast aside the body of the woman, which almost covered him, and leaped to his feet, thus confronting the old scoundrel just as he was in the very act of bending over his victims in order to make sure that they were indeed dead, and that he need have no further fear of them.

As the old man attempted to leap back out of the

reach of the detective, Nick's right hand shot ward and closed like a vise upon the arm of the millionaire.

"I'm not dead yet, by a long shot, Mr. Million Dean," he said, with a grim smile. "I am very alive, as you will presently discover; and now, if place any value whatever on your own worthless you will do as I shall command you to do."

"Don't kill me! Don't kill me! I'll do anything say!" pleaded Dean.

"Good! Then I will open one of those doors that you can call through it. When you can do you will order those men, one and all, to return this room, one by one, unarmed. You will make excuse you please, only get them here."

Dean rung his hands together in agony.

"They have gone," he moaned. "It is impossible to call them back again. I ordered them all to leave house. They were only too glad to go, and have gone. There is not one of them within sound my voice by this time."

"Nevertheless, call!" ordered Nick, and he opened one of the doors, still retaining his grasp on Dean.

But although the old man called and called again again, there was no reply, and at last, satisfied that had indeed departed, Nick drew Dean again inside room.

Then, with quick motions, he ran his hands at the old man's clothing to discover if he was armed and quickly determining that he was not, he released him and stepped back.

"Sit in that chair, and do not dare to disobey if you value your life at all," he ordered, almost bringing the millionaire into the chair he designated.

Then he stepped quickly to the woman and bent over her; but a glance sufficed to assure him that she was dead.

"See," he said, pointing toward her. "This is your work, and you shall suffer for it. No matter what she was, she was still a woman, and you are her murderer."

There was a telephone receiver upon the desk, and he seated himself there so that he faced Dean, p

receiver to his ear and called up the home of Jared Dean.

He was answered almost instantly, and it was Chick who came to the phone.

"Listen, Chick," he said. "I am at the house of old Daniel Dean. Now, do not ask questions, but do exactly as I say."

"All right," replied Chick; and Nick continued:

"I want you to get every living person out of that place as soon as you can. Don't wait to send for cargoes. Don't wait to get together more than the men's jewelry. Get out without delay. Take the whole outfit to the Savoy Hotel; it is the nearest to you. Wait for me there. Now get off the wire."

The detective hung up the receiver and waited a moment. Then he took it down again and replaced it in his ear.

"Hello, central!" he said. "Give me police headquarters as quickly as possible." Then, a moment later: "Police headquarters? All right. Give me Inspector McClusky." Then, a moment later: "That's an inspector? Good. I have called you because I want the order to originate through you. I am at the house of old Dean. You know where it is. Will you send up the station nearest here and send a patrol wagon to this place as quickly as possible? Let them break in the door if it is not opened for them. Arrest everybody in sight. I am in the library with old Dean. We will wait where we are until the men get here, and I will wait here for the men to come, for I don't propose to let the old devil have an opportunity to escape. I think the house is empty of his hirelings, but I am not sure. Thank you. Now, one thing more. I have reason to believe that the entire establishment of Jared Dean is to be blown up with dynamite—or with something worse—at any moment. It may have already gone into the air for all I know. I have ordered the place emptied, but I neglected the adjoining houses. Get the people out of them if you can. Still, doubtless they will not receive more than a severe shaking up. Will you meet me at the Savoy? Chick will be there with the Logans. I will go there as soon as I have detached old Dean to the police. Good-by."

Nick replaced the receiver. All the while he had been talking he had not taken his eyes from the face of his prisoner, who cowered in the chair on the opposite side of the table.

But now Nick left his chair and went around the desk until he stood facing the old scoundrel.

"I have only guessed at what you intended to do," he said, "but I can see by the expression of your haggard face that I have guessed with considerable correctness. Tell me, now, had you arranged to blow up the house of Jared Logan, with everybody in it?"

The old man nodded his head.

"When? At what time?" asked Nick.

"At seven-thirty o'clock. While they were at dinner," was the husky reply.

Nick looked at his watch. The hand pointed at seven-fifteen.

Again he seized the telephone, and once more he called for Jared Logan's number, while he prayed that his call might not be answered.

But there was an answer, and it was in the voice of Chick.

"You, Chick? Is everybody out? All but you? You have about ten minutes—perhaps not so much. For once in your life, run!"

He put down the receiver for the last time.

"Dean," he said.

The old man did not reply.

"Dean!" he called again; and still the old man did not respond.

The detective left his chair and strode around the table to the chair where the multi-millionaire was seated. His head had sunk forward on his breast and he was motionless.

Nick grasped him by the shoulder and shook him; and the old wreck of a man tottered forward and would have fallen had the detective not seized him and straightened him up again.

"Has he fainted or is he dead?" the detective asked of himself.

But even as he propounded the question, the heavy jaw that had set itself so hard all through the life of the millionaire dropped. The eyelids parted ever so

little, showing a pair of sightless, glassy eyeballs behind them, and Nick knew that it was death which had cheated the law.

"You have died, you old reprobate," mused Nick, while he put the body back in the chair so that it would not fall out upon the floor; "died while there were a hundred things which I wanted you to explain; died without a moment for repentance or remorse; died——"

There was a summons at the door and he paused.

"Who is there?" he called out, crossing to it.

"Officers of the law," came the reply, and Nick threw wide the door, admitting the captain of the precinct.

"Whom have you arrested since you entered the house?" asked Nick.

"Not a soul. The house is deserted. There was not a person in it. We had to break our way in through the basement door."

"So!" said Nick, turning and addressing the dead man in the chair, as if he were still living. "You had prepared well for the terrors of this night, had you not? You had driven every servant away before the hour came for the killing you intended to do. You had only your hirelings with the guns, had you? And those hirelings? From whence came they? From the ship upon which you would have started Morrison for the antipodes? Doubtless. Ah! you old villain! your villainy lingers around us even after your death.

"Captain," he continued, turning abruptly, "I haven't much to offer you in the way of prisoners. This woman was shot by the old man's order, in my presence. They—his hirelings—would have shot me also, only they missed; but she was as bad as her master."

"Two dead ones," remarked the captain, grimly. Then he added: "I knew the woman. She used to be Minnie Williams. She was a badger in Thirtieth Street. I suppose she was in some game with old Dean. So these are all you've got for me, eh?"

"That is all," assented Nick. "Have you searched the house?"

"My men are searching it now."

Five minutes later the men appeared, and among them they ushered two men.

"Forbes and Robertson," said Nick, when he saw them. "Where did you find them?"

"Loaded and chained to the gulf in the wine cellar," replied one of the policemen.

"How long have you been there?" asked Nick, turning to the man Forbes.

"Since the morning we left police headquarters was the reply. "Old Dean sent for us, and like for we came here. To-night we were to be taken away killed; I don't know which."

"Both, most likely," remarked Nick. Then, to the officer, he added:

"Take them to the station house. I will attend them later."

Then, to the captain:

"Captain, this house is at your disposal. Will you send for the coroner and take charge now?"

"Sure."

* * * * *

Nick's driver was still awaiting him. The arrival of the police patrol had not disturbed him, and Nick directed that he be driven at once to the house of Judge Logan.

"There ain't much house left here, I reckon," said the driver, as he leaped from the box. "I don't know what has happened, but something seems to have gone up in the air. I can't get any closer. The fire engine and hook and ladder companies take up all the road."

The stately house was a mass of ruins.

"Drive to the Savoy," ordered Nick; and there he found Chick awaiting him at the curb.

"Narrow escape that," said Chick. "The house went into the air before we were two blocks away. Look, you telephoned when you did."

"And it was largely guesswork at that," replied Nick.

"A mighty lucky guess for us all," laughed Chick.

* * * * *

"We've got the entire outfit, Mr. Logan," remarked the detective, a few moments later. "I think you may travel to and from your office without an escort now."

THE END.

Next week's issue, No. 399, will contain one of the most remarkable tales you have ever read. The story is entitled "A Dead Man's Power; or, The Mystery of a Telephone Number." You cannot afford to miss it.

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